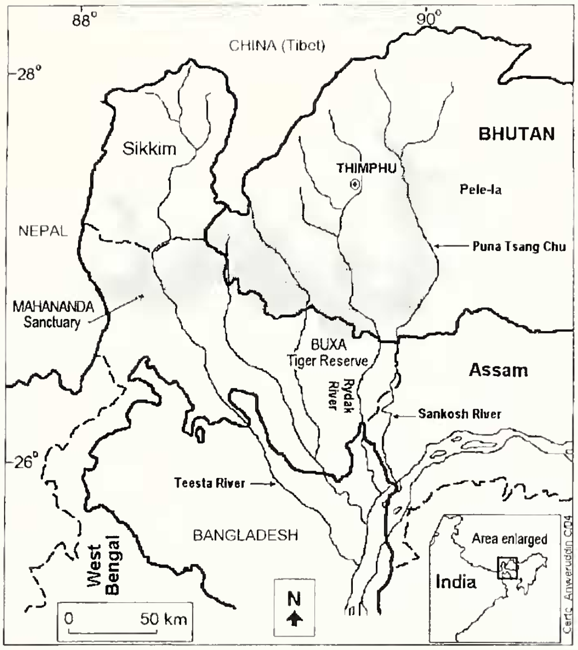

Fig. 1: Eastern-most range of Hanuman or Common Langur

specific treatment for different extant subspecies of the Hanuman Langur. Although it is a very well-documented species, the eastern limit of its distribution was imperfectly known with different authors suggesting erroneous eastern ranges (Roonwal and Mohnot 1977; Tikader 1983; Corbet and Hill 1992; Das *et al.* 1995; Qiu and Bleisch 1996). Choudhury (2007) tried to fix it as the Rydak river in northern West Bengal, India, and Sankosh river or Puna Tsang *Chu* in Bhutan, and Padma and Meghna rivers in Bangladesh (historically Jamuna also).

As indicated in other reports (Wangchuk *et al.* 2004) and as found during recent visits to Bhutan (Choudhury 2008), the Hanuman Langur also occurs east of the Sankosh river or Puna Tsang *Chu* up to Pele-la (Fig. 1) in Wangdue Phodrang *dzongkhag* (= district). Hence, in India and Bangladesh, the eastern limit is marked by large rivers, while in Bhutan a large river in the southern part and a high mountain ridge in the north, act as the zoogeographic barriers.

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3. THE COMMON INDIAN MONGOOSE *HERPESTES EDWARDSII* AS SEED DISPERSER IN SRIHARIKOTA ISLAND, INDIA

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The Common Indian Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii* is a carnivore, but fruits and roots have also been recorded in its diet (Prater 1971; Menon 2003). In this short communication, we provide further evidence of the Common Indian Mongoose as a fruit eater, and more importantly as a seed disperser from a study on frugivory in Sriharikota Island, Nellore district, Andhra Pradesh. On April 16, 2007, we observed small droppings scattered on the roadside and some more deposited underneath parapets of a cable network. All scats were clumped within a 5 sq. m area and were approximately 8 m away from the nearest fruiting tree. The droppings were small (*c.* 2 cm in length), and our tribal (Yanadi) field assistant told us that the scats were those of the mongoose, which was confirmed on finding the footprints of the species close to the droppings. The droppings of Mongoose were hard to find and we came across it only on three occasions during the study period.

On examination of 28 of the droppings collected we counted 362 seeds of *Phoenix farinifera*, a small (3 m tall) date palm species common in Sriharikota. Later, we also recorded seeds of *Grewia rhamnifolia* and *Syzigium cumini*. In Sriharikota, the Golden Jackal *Canis aureus* and Small Indian Civet *Viverricula indica* are the major dispersers of these three plant species (David *et al.* 2008).

According to Balasubramanian and Bole (1993), the Common Indian Mongoose does not play a significant role in seed dispersal as it eats the pulp and drops the seeds under the parent plant. However, our observations in Sriharikota suggest that the Common Indian Mongoose is a probable legitimate seed disperser as seeds were recorded in its faeces. Other than the mongoose, small carnivores like Badgers, Martens and Civets are known to play a role in seed dispersal and facilitate germination (Herrera 1989; Rabinowitz 1991; Zhou *et al.* 2008). Hence, small mammals like the mongoose must be intensively evaluated for their role in seed dispersal.

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4. HIGHEST ELEVATIONS REACHED BY ASIAN ELEPHANTS *ELEPHAS MAXIMUS* LINN. – A REVIEW

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The Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus* Linn. occurs across south and south-east Asia, from peninsular India and Sri Lanka to Sumatra and Borneo (Corbet and Hill 1992; Choudhury 1999). It occurs in the plains as well as hills, occasionally moving to higher areas. The highest mountain range within and near its distribution range is the Himalaya. How far up the species has ascended has been a matter of great interest and curiosity.

The first published attempt to find out the highest occurrence of Asian elephants was by Capt. Molesworth (1914). He mentioned of 3,109 m at Bhutan-Tibet boundary, which he recorded during the Aka expeditions. He mentioned that the elephants move up during hot weather. This area is apparently somewhere in the present West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh because the Aka tribes inhabit there. Although, the boundary of both Bhutan and Tibet is nowhere nearby, it is understandable that about a century back clear demarcation on the inaccessible mountains was difficult.

Shebbeare (1915) while quoting Mr. Tinne of the Forest Department stated that elephants ascend at all seasons at Rechila and Sathila in British Bhutan, at 3,066 m to feed on bamboos. Even tracks were seen in 0.6 m snow in April 1907. Elwes (1916) while supplementing Shebbeare (1915) said that "in August 1886 I made a trip with Mr. Prestage from Darjeeling up the Rishila or Rechila with the object of finding a shorter and better route into the Chumbi Valley. For some miles the only path that then existed was made by wild elephants, and our camp below the summit at about 2,743 m was disturbed in the night by a herd. But I was assured by my friend, the late Mr. C.B. Clarke, FRS, that on one of his botanical expeditions into eastern Sikkim, he had seen elephants' tracks in the snow at about 3,657 m".

Betts (1947) mentioned that "While crossing the Bompu La (2,926 m) in early September I was surprised to find fresh traces of a large number of elephants..." He further stated that the ringal bamboos growing there attracted the elephants during the summer months. He, however, did not pin point the location and no subsequent writer except Choudhury (1999) highlighted the site.